

Tom's Coffee
THE
HISTORY
OF THE *Nº 72*
House
SIEGES

OF *Liverpool*
AQUILEIA and BERWICK.

BEING

The Story on which the new TRAGEDY of
AQUILEIA is founded,

WITH

Some REMARKS on that PLAY.

LONDON.

Printed for T. KENNERSLY, at the Paper-Mill, in
St. Paul's Church-yard.

M DCC LX,

[Price Six Pence.]

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M D C C L X X

[The end of the world]



THE
HISTORY
OF THE
Siege of AQUILEIA.



HOEVER expects to find in the siege of Aquileia, the story on which the new tragedy is founded, will be disappointed. However, as there is some affinity between the history of the siege and the story of the play, it may be necessary, for the better understanding the latter, we should be acquainted with the former.

To say that Maximinus, the twenty-sixth Roman emperor, laid siege to the city of Aquileia, in the year 238 of the Christian æra, is not enough. We shall present the reader with the motives of this undertaking, and in order to do this, we must take a retrospective view of his story.

In

In the year 235, during the reign of Alexander, the High-Germans and other northern nations took up arms as usual against the Romans. They marched with such rapidity towards Italy, as even to throw the capital into consternation. Alexander opposed their progress, and by his extraordinary vigilance daily gained advantage over them. But his soldiers, quartered in Gaul, having, under the reign of Heliogabalus, the preceding emperor, been inured to idleness and debauchery, could not brook with Alexander's severe discipline. Among these troops was one Maximinus, by nation a Goth, whom Alexander, in regard of his valor, had preferred to the command of a body of Pannonians; but he, unmindful of his duty, and of the obligations he owed to the emperor, instead of attempting to appease the licentious and discontented soldiery, fomented under-hand the tumult, and by his seditious speeches inspired the multitude with contempt for Alexander, as one who was governed by a penurious woman, meaning Mamaea his mother. Alexander was at this time near Mentz on the Rhine, and, having but a small body of troops, Maximinus resolved to lay hold of that opportunity to dispatch him, not doubting but his own soldiers, on the death of the emperor, would raise him to that dignity. He communicated his design to some of the most bold and forward of them, who, animated with the hopes of great preferment, readily entered into his measures,

measures, and the execrable act was perpetrated. Alexander, with great composure, submitted his neck to the executioner. Upon which, Maximinus by the soldiers was proclaimed emperor, but the senate and people of Rome, at first, refused to confirm their election, though afterwards they consented to it.

The new emperor began his reign with committing the most horrid cruelties, laying waste by fire and sword every province he marched through; he seemed to threaten all Germany with becoming a scene of desolation, and punished, with the most painful deaths, all those who did not espouse his cause. The people of Rome began to dread the tyrant, and every day their fears were increased by the news of some barbarous act; they prayed incessantly that he might never come to the capital: great numbers were slain there by his order, whom he either suspected of infidelity, or who were acquainted with his mean extraction *. These proceedings, at length, became so hateful to the Romans, that they could not avoid shewing their dislike; but Afric first shewed its detestation of him, by

* He was, according to Syncellus, a native of Thrace; according to Herodian, Capitolinus, and Jornandes, born in a village on the confines of that province, and the country of the Barbarians. His father, by name Micca, was a Goth, and his mother Ahaba, an Alan. He was of a very mean extraction, and in his early youth a shepherd.

by chusing Gordian, the proconsul of Afric, emperor, but his son being slain in a battle with some of Maximinus's adherents, the father slew himself. Upon which, the senate of Rome elected the youngest Gordian, grandson to the eldest, and made him Cesar. The senate, now considering in what dangers they were involved, and what might issue from the vast power of Maximinus, made all necessary preparations for their safety and security, writing letters into all provinces, commanding all those governors to be displaced who were established by Maximinus, and ordering Gordian to be proclaimed emperor. This order and direction was obeyed in most provinces; in some the governors were slain, and in others, the senate's messengers; so that there was bloodshed in all parts, and the cruelty of Maximinus made all men cruel. When the tyrant heard of these transactions, he grew enraged; his fury was nothing short of madness: he resolved to march into Italy, there to glut his insatiable appetite of revenge, by burning all the towns and villages. To oppose the formidable enemy, the senate made choice of M. Clodius, Pupienus, Maximus, and Decimus, Cœlius, Balbinus, for emperors. The friends of Maximinus in Rome, were put to death, and levies were made for Pupienus, who, being the better acquainted with martial affairs, left the city to oppose Maximinus, who, with amazing rapidity, had crossed the Alps, and entered Italy, not having incumbered his
army

with carrying provision, being in expectation of getting plenty in Italy, but he was terribly mortified when he found he was deprived of this advantage; the country, before he came into it, was, by the precaution of the senate, rendered almost destitute of provision. However, he pursued his march, and being informed that the city of Aquileia had shut its gates against a party which he had sent to take possession of it, he marched thither in person, with all his forces, not doubting but the inhabitants would submit on the approach of his whole army. But Crispinus, and Menophilus, two consuls of great resolution and intrepidity, to whom the senate had committed the defence of the city*, answered the tribune, sent by Maximinus to summon them to surrender, that they were determined to hold out to the last; and rather forfeit their lives, than betray their trust, or yield to such a cruel, bloody, and faithless tyrant. At the same time, to animate the inhabitants who began to waver, they gave out, that Apollo, the tutelor god of the place, had assured them of victory, which dispelled all fear, so that every one began to prepare for a vigorous defence. Maximinus, in the mean time, caused all the vines and neighbouring groves, which were a great ornament to the place, to be cut down, and began to batter the walls with an incredible number of warlike engines; and to

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* Universal Hist. Vol. XV,

harrafs the besieged with repeated assaults; which they sustained with such resolution and intrepidity, as can hardly be expressed. Even the women and children appeared on the ramparts, and bore their share in the common danger; the women especially signalized their zeal, by yielding their hair to be employed in making strings for the bows, and other warlike machines. The senate, out of gratitude, after the death of Maximinus, caused a magnificent temple to be erected, which they consecrated to VENUS CALVA, or *Venus the bald*. The soldiers of Maximinus, in the beginning of the siege shewed great ardor; which, however, began to abate when they found the inhabitants firmly determined to undergo all labors and hardships, rather than submit: Maximinus, highly provoked at their backwardness, and besides, enraged at the bitter reproaches uttered by the inhabitants against him and his son, as often as they approached the walls, caused several of his officers to be publicly executed *, ascribing the coolness of the soldiers to the want of courage in them. This exasperated the soldiers already inclined to mutiny, for want of provisions, of which, and even of water, there was a great scarcity in the camp. Besides, a report was spread, that the whole empire was arming against Maximinus, and ready to fall upon those who supported him in his tyranny. Hereupon the Albanians,

* Universal Hist. Vol. XV.

Albanians, that is, the soldiers belonging to the camp of Alba, took a sudden resolution to dispatch the author of so many calamities ; and having made his guards accomplices in the design, and tearing his portrait out of his ensign, they entered his tent at noon-day, when he and his son were reposing themselves after dinner ; boldly set upon him, and slew him without resistance, and likewise his son, saying, *of a cursed litter, not a whelp is to be spared.* With them were slain Anolinus their captain of the guards, and all their chief ministers and friends. Such was the end of the reign, or rather of the tyranny of the two Maximins, the father in the 65th year of his age, and the son in the 21st.

The whole army now presented themselves unarmed, before the gates of Aquileia, acquainted the besieged with the death of Maximinus, and desired to be admitted in the city. It was not thought adviseable to open the gates to them ; but, after they had adored the images of Maximus, Balbinus, and Gordian, placed for that purpose on the ramparts, a great quantity of provision was sent to their camp ; for they were almost famished, and the next day they all took the usual oaths to Maximus and Balbinus. The heads of the two Maximins were sent to Rome, and their bodies thrown into the river. An express was also immediately dispatched to Rome with these joyful tidings, who, passing through Ravenna, found the emperor Maximus there

busy in assembling his forces, in order to march against the tyrant. But when he understood, that he and his son were killed, that their army had submitted and sworn fidelity to him and his colleague, transported with joy, and laying aside all military preparations, he repaired to the temples, to return thanks to the gods for such signal and unexpected success *.

Thus the reader, who has seen the play, will easily discover how near a resemblance the story of it, and this passage in the Roman history, bear to each other. There is more than a possibility for conjecturing, that the play was originally wrote without the author's having his eye on the siege of Aquileia, and that it has attained this new name, with a few alterations, in order to be brought on the theatre; for before it could not by any means be represented on an English stage. This observation will be more clearly demonstrated by perusing the siege of Berwick.

* The two Maximins were slain in the 991st year of the city of Rome; 261 years after the settlement of the empire by Augustus; 238 after our Saviour's nativity; 142 after the last of the twelve Cæsars; and 45 after the public sale of the empire by the soldiers.

The Siege of B E R W I C K.

WE shall first present the reader with the motives of this siege, that we may be enabled to form a comprehensive idea of it. Edward Baliol, the son of John Baliol, by the help of Edward III. king of England, usurped the crown of Scotland in the year 1332, that prince at the death of his father had been left a minor and prisoner in England; wherefore there was a regency appointed, and by a treaty it was stipulated, that the English barons should be restored to the estates they had formerly possessed in Scotland; several however were denied the benefit of this article, Edward interposed in their behalf, but the Scots amused him with evasive answers, whence he concluded, they intended to keep the lands they had usurped. There are historians who say, these differences might have been adjusted, had Edward been pacifically disposed: but he was for war, and was glad the Scots furnished him with an handle, viz. their seizure of the town of Upsetlington, situated on the river Tweed, in the bishopric of Durham. The barons, whose interest was more immediately concerned, rejoiced that their monarch grew warm, and did not fail to exert themselves for the recovery of their inheritances. They had recourse to Edward Baliol, at this time a prisoner in England, and encouraged him to make

make an effort for his father's crown : he was naturally enterprising, and therefore not averse to the proposal ; but no sooner was it made known to him, than he embraced it with eagerness. The time was favorable, because of the nonage of David de Brus, the death of James lord Douglas, and the age and infirmities of Thomas Randolph, the guardian of the realm. Edward, without delay, prepared for the expedition. Edward Baliol entered Scotland at the head of the English forces, and having defeated a strong body of the Brusians at Gladsmuir, was immediately crowned king without farther opposition. The Brusians offered a truce till Candlemas the next year, to which he assented, that he might in the interim hold a parliament to settle the affairs of the kingdom. Baliol, thinking all things secure, dismissed his English guards, and repaired to Annan, where he proposed to hold his parliament. The Brusian party, without paying any regard to the truce, resolved to snatch this opportunity of seizing him and his attendants, and executed the scheme with such circumspection and dispatch, that he had scarce time to mount a horse, without bridle or saddle, on which he escaped with great difficulty to Carlisle, while his followers fell into the hands of the enemy, and his own brother Henry lost his life, after having performed miracles of valor, in attempting to effect a retreat.

The Scots, under sir W. Douglas, flushed with their success, made incursions into Cumberland, which they ravaged without scruple, and this infraction of the peace afforded Edward king of England a plausible pretence to renounce the treaty, and declare for Baliol. Hostilities were now committed on both sides, and several skirmishes fought on the border. The king of England, having no longer any reason to conceal his intentions of making a conquest of Scotland, denounced David de Brus a contumacious vassal; and while Scotland was divided into two factions, the one being most part of the nobility, and their vassals, tenants and servants were for David's right to the crown; and the other consisting of the Cummins, and several others, were for Baliol's. He demanded the restitution of the town of Berwick, which his father and grandfather had held many years, and followed the ambassadors with his army.

They received for answer, " That Berwick
 " always belonged to Scotland, till his grand-
 " father Edward had injuriously seized upon
 " it. At length, when Robert de Brus, their
 " last king, had recovered the rest of Scotland,
 " he took away that town from Edward (his
 " father) and reduced it to its ancient rightful
 " possessor and form of government, and that
 " not long ago, Edward himself, by the ad-
 " vice of his parliament, had renounced all
 " right which he or his ancestors might pre-
 " tend to have over all Scotland in general,
 " or

" or any of its towns and places in particular.
 " From that time they were not conscious to
 " themselves that they had acted any thing
 " against the league so solemnly swore to.
 " Why then, within the compass of a few
 " years, were they twice assaulted by secret
 " fraud and open war ? these things being
 " so, they desired the ambassadors to incline
 " the mind of their king to equity, and that
 " he would not watch his opportunity to
 " injure and prejudice a young king in his
 " absence, * who was both innocent, and also
 " his own sister's husband ; as for themselves,
 " they would refuse no conditions of peace,
 " provided they were honourable ; but if he
 " threatened them with an unjust force, then,
 " according to the tutelage of the king com-
 " mitted to them, they resolved rather to die
 " a noble death, than consent to a peace pre-
 " judicial to themselves, or the kingdom."

This was the answer of the council of Scot-
 land. But the king of England sought not
 peace, but conquest ; and therefore having en-
 creased his army with foreign troops, he be-
 sieged Berwick by sea and land, omitting no-
 thing which might contribute to the taking
 of it ; for having a vast number of forces, he
 gave his enemy no rest night nor day. The
 Scots had supplied this frontier with a strong
 garrison, under two of their bravest com-
 manders, namely, Sir William de Keith, go-
 vernor

* Meaning David de Brus, who was gone to France.

vernor of the town, and Patrick Dunbar Earl of Marche, guardian of the castle. These leaders made such a gallant defence, ruining the works of the besiegers in repeated sallies, and throwing fire into their ships in the river, which burned many of them, that they began to be weary of their undertaking. In one of these sallies, William Seton, the deputy-governor's illegitimate son was lost, much lamented by all for his singular valor. For whilst he endeavoured to leap into an English ship, his own being driven too far off by the waves, he fell into the sea; it being impossible in that exigency, that any relief should come to him. Another of Seton's sons, but lawfully begotten, who, out of too great an eagerness, proceeded too far in a sally, was taken by the English. But the siege which was begun on the 13th day of April, 1333, had now lasted three months; and the defendants, besides their toil and continual watchings, were in great want of provisions; so that the garrison, unable to hold out any longer, made an agreement with the English, "That unless they were relieved by the 30th day of July, they would surrender the town." For the performance of which, Thomas, Alexander Seton's eldest son, was given as hostage. In the mean time Archibald Douglas was chosen commander of the Scottish army, with which he marched into England, intending to make Edward raise the siege of Berwick; this step was contrary to the advice of his wisest officers.

officers. He came in sight of the English army, on Sunday the 18th day of July: Edward, as soon as he was informed of this, was enraged, and though the time of the truce was not expired, he sent an herald into the town to acquaint the governor, "That if he did not immediately surrender the city, himself, and his garrison, he would put his son Thomas to death." The governor answered, that the day appointed for surrendering the city was not yet come, and that he had given his faith to stay till the time allowed by their agreement was expired; but all was in vain. Hereupon, love, piety, fear, and duty towards his country, variously afflicted his paternal soul; Edward, to strike terror in the most sensible part, caused a gallows to be erected full in the sight of the besieged, and ordered Seton's two sons, one an hostage, the other a prisoner of war, to be brought forth to execution. At this miserable spectacle the governor was in the greatest perplexity, but in this fluctuation of his mind, his wife, the mother of the young gentlemen, a woman of an heroic spirit, came to him, and put him in mind of his fidelity towards his king, (David de Brus) his love to his country, and the dignity of his noble family, and endeavoured to fix his wavering mind by saying; "If these children be put to death, you have others remaining alive; and, besides, we are neither of us so old but we may have more. If they escape death, yet it will not

“ not be long, but that by some sudden casualty, or else through age, they must yield to fate; but if any blot of infamy should stick upon the family of the Seton’s, it would remain to all posterity, and be an indeliable blemish even to their innocent offspring.” She farther told him, “ That she had often heard those men much commended in the discourses of the wise, who had given up themselves and their children as a sacrifice for the safety of their country; but if he should give up the town committed to his trust, he would betray his country, and yet be never the more certain of his childrens lives neither; for how could he hope that a tyrant who had violated his faith now, would stand to his word for the future? and therefore she entreated him not to prefer an uncertainty, and (if it should be obtained) a momentary advantage to a certain and perpetual ignominy.” By this discourse, she somewhat settled his mind, and that he might not be shocked, by so dismal a spectacle, she carried him to another place, from whence it could not possibly be seen, and having refused to give up the castle, Edward caused the two young gentlemen to be executed, who suffered with great resolution and chearfulness, and esteemed it a great glory to suffer death in defence of their father’s honour, and their country’s liberty. Douglas, with his army, encamped at Botheville, upon which Ed-

ward removed to Halidowne-Hill. The Scottish troops were drawn up in four divisions, headed by the chief noblemen of their country. The English army was disposed in four battalions with the archers, for which the kingdom was always famous, on their flanks. In this situation, Edward waited till the enemy should think proper to attack him, which they did next day with great fury, but the attempt was rash as well as ill-concerted, the English being posted on a hill, the assailants were rolled headlong down it before they reached the summit ; and, as they were in armour, they presently became fatigued in consequence of running ; they were terribly galled by the arrows of the English, and they suffered greatly by huge stones that incessantly met them in their career. Their impetuosity was checked when they knew that their general was slain by a spear. All opposition on the side of the hill was now at an end, they fell broken and dejected : which Edward perceiving ordered John lord Darcy to attack them in flank, with a body of light-armed infantry from Ireland, while he himself fell in among them at the head of a choice brigade of arms and archers on horsebacks. The men at arms, in the Scottish army, had dismounted in the beginning of the battle, and now when they might have been of some service on horseback, were deprived of their horses by the lacquies, who had run away with them from the field of battle. The Scots
being

being now surrounded an horrible carnage ensued. - Rapin says, thirty-two thousand Scots were slain ; but this is scarce credible. Smollet, with more probability, says, twenty thousand, but Buchanan says only ten thousand, yet acknowledges there are some writers who say fourteen thousand. The English are said to have lost one knight, one esquire, and thirteen foot soldiers.

After this action, all relief was despaired of, therefore Seton surrendered the town, and Dunbar the castle of Berwick next morning upon condition to march out with all their goods. Both of them were obliged to swear fealty to Edward, and Dunbar was enjoined to rebuild the castle of Dunbar at his own expence, which he had demolished, that it might not be a receptacle to the English. Edward, having staid there a few days, committed the town and the rest of the war to the care of Baliol ; and leaving Edward Talbot, with some troops to assist him, returned into England.

REMARKS

REMARKS on the TRAGEDY of AQUILEIA.

THE poet has very strictly observed two great unities of the drama, viz. time and place, for the scene never changes after the curtain is drawn up, nor is the time supposed to be any longer than the play takes in representing. It were to be wished, the third great unity, viz. action, merited an equal degree of propriety; it is true, the action is but one action, and it is the same from the end of the first act, to the middle of the fifth, that is, the plot, if a plot it may be called, has not a sufficiency of incidents to divert our attention, which is roused by telling us extremely early, too early, that Paulus and Titus, the governor's two sons, are taken prisoners in a sally, and that the enemy will behead them before the walls, in sight of their father, if he refuses delivering up the city: the governor perseveres in his defence, in hopes of relief, and especially, as Aquileia is looked upon as the key of Italy; therefore we are in the utmost expectation to know the fate of the two captives, every act presents nothing of variety; we are in the same painful suspense concerning the fate of Paulus and Titus, which is all that rouses the attention of the audience, and the sentence being told so very soon, the play becomes languid before

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we have seen the fifth act. But who that is acquainted with the fierceness and implacable tyranny of Maximin, can believe that he will thus dally, that his pride will submit him to send herald after herald, to know whether the consul will deliver up the city. This is softening his passion, at a time when we are to imagine it boiled with the utmost rage. Maximin had too much of that savage ferocity and impatience to wait in this manner, it is inconsistent with his character to suppose it: but as Maximin is no other than Edward III. king of England, obliquely, the absurdity is palliated when we know this: for Edward, if we may believe history, was not so great a tyrant as Maximin. The affinity between the story of the play, and the siege of Berwick just related, is too near and obvious to need any pointing out. It is also almost evident, as was before observed, that the tragedy has attained the name of Aquileia, since an English audience would, doubtless, not suffer it to be represented on the stage in its original dress: therefore, as well as a new name, there are some alterations made, particularly in the catastrophe, where the principal are. According to the poet, only one of the sons is killed, not executed, but in battle, by a javelin, which was aimed at his father; this son in the siege of Berwick, is the younger, and a prisoner of war. He has made the other son survive, who in history is the hostage. These and some other necessary variations were

were unavoidable, since the affinity between them would have been too glaring for the bare name of Aquileia to have shielded. To make amends for this, the language is extremely fine, every act is replete with the most noble and tender sentiments. Almost every expression from the mouths of *Æmilius* and *Cornelia* raise in us pity and admiration, and almost envy. Who can look on her afflictions without sympathizing with her? who can behold the Roman consul, in the greatest agony of divided sorrow, between the love of his country and paternal fondness without glowing with indignation at the tyrant, and admiring his fortitude? To, Mr. Garrick, and Mrs. Cibber, the author is greatly indebted for the justice they do him, but Mr. Garrick seems to excel the poet, his inimitable action deserves the praise — words cannot give; we glow at his raptures, and with hearts susceptible of condolence, feel his tenderest woes; and Mrs. Cibber adds all the force female strength can give, she like a tender mother, knows no other sorrow but that of parting with her children; in this fond, this delicate passion, she adds a lustre, the painter's pencil would be too weak to imitate; nor could the poet's pen, without this great addition, have taught us to feel that grief he meant to express. We melt when she sinks under the load of affliction, and the most flinty heart cannot but pity. This is the only recommendation the play has, and here we cannot

cannot forbear observing, that if inferior performers had acted these parts, perhaps, it would have met with very little, if any, applause. We would not, however, insinuate, that they alone, merit all the praise of an impartial spectator. The Poet may, perhaps, claim a precedence; indisputably to him we are indebted for those very fine expressions we so much admire in the mouths of *Æmilius* and *Cornelia*, but we cannot help owning our dissatisfaction, that so much elegant and studied language is thrown away to dress a barren subject, which has no other advantage but what it has gained from this assistance, and which, owing to the fault of the poet, is the first on which we remember a tragedy to have been wrote without incidents.

The poet, in order to introduce a very striking scene, and which, indeed, he has made one of the best in the whole play, has, near the end of the fourth act, made *Titus* return, who having told *Maximin*, that if he would grant him permission, he would go and try to soften the inflexibility of his father, who meets his son with reproaches, and calls him the tool of *Maximin*. *Titus* presently deceives his father, and tells him, that the purpose of his errand is, to desire he will defend the city, for the yielding of it up will not spare their lives, that they had bound themselves, by a solemn oath, to perish by each other's swords, in case such a step should be

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taken

taken for their safety; Æmilius is all raptures at his son's noble worth, and the scene is nobly finished. But here, as in many other places, he derogates from the true character of Maximin, whom we can never suppose would grant the request of Titus, though the other brother was left as hostage. This is the first act of his lenity we remember to have been told.

There is a theatrical fault we cannot avoid taking notice of. Cornelia, after having wept over the corpse of her dead son, retires full of affliction—This is well enough, and the play concludes very well—But who can see without surprize; Cornelia, in the character of Mrs. Cibber return, and speak an epilogue. This is absurd. Could not somebody else have spoke this epilogue, and Paulus and she have remained, where, according to the poet, we supposed them to have been?

F I N I S.